

# nih record



**ABOVE** • Science teachers reap NIH curriculum bounty at national convention. Read the full story on page 1.

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### 'Just Keep True North'

## Zerhouni Predicts Balanced End To Conflict of Interest Issue

By Rich McManus

**T**he conflict of interest (CoI) issue that has so absorbed NIH since a series of news articles brought concerns to light in late 2003 will subside, predicted NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni. The agency will emerge balanced, trustworthy and as deeply involved in the vitality of science as ever, he said in an interview May 12.

"I'm very optimistic that our approach is going to lead to a much more fair and balanced set of rules," he said.

On Feb. 1, the director announced an "interim final HHS supplemental ethics rule" that immediately drew fire from employees on grounds that it was too strict, too intrusive on personal financial decisions, too broadly applied and detrimental to recruitment and retention of top scientists. But what employees didn't appreciate at the time, according to Zerhouni,



NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni

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NIH's staff science teacher convention in Dallas.

## Teachers Walk the NIH Red Carpet

By Cynthia Delgado

This year, NIH exhibitors did in unity what no single institute or center can usually do—cranked up the NIH brand at least one notch higher, effectively increasing the public's understanding of the agency's identity, goals and achievements. At the National Science Teachers Association (NSTA) 2005 national conference in Dallas, 12 ICs and associate organizations, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, clustered their exhibits at the Dallas Convention Center to

## NIH's First Online Chatroom Celebrates National DNA Day

By Geoff Spencer

In an online first for NIH, thousands of teachers and students observed the third annual National DNA Day on Apr. 25 by taking part in a web chat featuring experts from the National Human Genome Research Institute.

From 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., nearly 1,200 questions poured in from students representing a broad cross-section of schools, states and even nations. More than two dozen of NHGRI's basic, clinical and ethics research staff—from postdocs to director Dr. Francis Collins and scientific director Dr. Eric Green—took part in the team effort to answer as many of those questions as possible in the relatively short time.

The students' questions ranged from the sophisticated, "How does methylation of DNA occur and what does it do to protect DNA from being cleaved?" to the simple, "Does SpongeBob have DNA?" A transcript of the chat can

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## briefs

### Two NIH'ers Named to American Academy

Two NIH scientists are among 196 new fellows and 17 new foreign honorary members elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. The 213 men and women are leaders in scholarship, business, the arts and public affairs. The academy's 225th class of new members was named Apr. 26 in Cambridge, Mass., headquarters of the AAAS.

The NIH fellows are Dr. Nancy Goldman Nossal, chief, Laboratory of Molecular and Cellular Biology, NIDDK, and Dr. Anita Bauer Roberts, chief, Laboratory of Cell Regulation and Carcinogenesis, NCI.

New members are nominated and elected by current AAAS members. Nossal's nomination was in the class Biological Sciences, biochemistry and molecular biology section. Roberts is within the same class, but in the medical sciences (including physiology and pharmacology), clinical medicine and public health section.

The induction ceremony is Oct. 8 in Cambridge.

### Breast Cancer Is Topic of GM Conference

Some of the world's foremost researchers will present their latest findings on breast cancer at this year's General Motors Cancer Research annual scientific conference, June 14-15. NIH investigators and staff are invited to attend the conference, which starts at 8:30 a.m., June 14, in Masur Auditorium, Bldg. 10. There is no advance registration or attendance fee required. Additionally, the Wednesday Afternoon Lecture Series on June 15, at 1 p.m., will feature presentations by each of the winners of the 2005 General Motors Cancer Research Awards.

To obtain a copy of the conference agenda, visit <http://www4.od.nih.gov/gmcr/>. For more information about the program, contact Mary Ruemker at (919) 684-4056 or email [mary.ruemker@duke.edu](mailto:mary.ruemker@duke.edu). Sign language interpreters will be provided. For other reasonable accommodation, phone (301) 496-1776 or email [pc68v@nih.gov](mailto:pc68v@nih.gov).

### Salutaris Presents 'Noons-in-June'

This year, the NIH Salutaris employee group will celebrate the 9th annual Noons-in-June lecture series by welcoming Dr. John Corvino. He teaches philosophy at Wayne State University in Detroit, where he specializes in ethics. He is editor of *Same Sex: Debating the Ethics, Science, and Culture of Homosexuality*. Corvino is also a regular contributor to *Between the Lines*, Michigan's GBLT weekly. He will speak on "Born or Made—and What's the Difference?" on Friday, June 10 between 11:30 a.m. and 1 p.m. in Bldg. 40, Conf. Rm. 1201-1203.

For more information, contact Glenda Keen, (301) 496-5089. For the Federal Relay, contact 1-800-877-8339. Sign language interpreters will be provided. Individuals who need reasonable accommodation should contact Carlton Coleman at (301) 496-2906.

### Chemical Spill Empties Building

A sulfuric acid spill at an NIH-leased facility at 5625 Fishers Lane in Rockville sent 300-400 workers, mostly NIH'ers, out of the building May 17. The accident was cleaned up within several hours and employees returned to work. Two people were transported to Suburban Hospital with inhalation injuries and were later released. Two others were treated at the scene, said John Dattoli, acting associate director, Security and Emergency Response, ORS.

The incident occurred when a contractor was delivering a 55-gallon drum of sulfuric acid to an acid tank located in a basement mechanical room. Liquid spilled onto the floor and a cloud of vapor formed.

The Montgomery County Fire Department responded to the scene first at 9:40 a.m., assisted by the NIH Fire Department. Hazardous materials teams mopped up the spilled acid with absorbent pads and flushed the area with water. Initial cleanup took about 3 hours, with more extensive cleaning scheduled for the following weekend. Authorities were investigating residual chemicals in the acid tank to determine what incompatible materials created the reaction that caused the spill. They also want to determine how much material was spilled. Workers were readmitted to the building around 12:30 p.m.

"Even though this was an unfortunate accident, it is an excellent example of how the cooperative efforts of ORS, ORF and Montgomery County can be utilized to effectively address accidents at NIH off-campus facilities," said Gary Hess, NIH fire chief.

### FEW Holds Meeting, June 14

The next meeting of Federally Employed Women is Tuesday, June 14, from noon to 1 p.m. in Bldg. 10, Conf. Rm. 3-1608. There will be a presentation by David H. Lamp of First Command Financial Planning.

### Wednesday Afternoon Lectures

The Wednesday Afternoon Lecture series—held on its namesake day at 3 p.m. in Masur Auditorium, Bldg. 10—features Dr. Jonathan Sprent on June 8, speaking on "Subsets of Memory CD8+ Cells." He is professor, department of immunology, Scripps Research Institute, La Jolla, Calif.

On June 15 from 1 to 3 p.m. in Masur, the General Motors Cancer Research Foundation Laureate Lectures will be held, introduced by Dr. Samuel Wells, Jr., president of the GM Cancer Research Foundation and professor of surgery at Duke University Medical Center. Winners of the Sloan, Kettering and Mott cancer research prizes will lecture.

For more information or for reasonable accommodation, call Hilda Madine, (301) 594-5595.

nih record

## Employees Gain E-Access to Personnel Folders

NIH, in collaboration with HHS, is implementing an E-Gov initiative to provide you with easier and faster access to your Official Personnel Folder (OPF). Your personnel file is owned by the Office of Personnel Management and is accessible to you and to NIH human resources staff. The OPF is a file containing records that cover an individual's entire federal employment history (but does not include contractors or fellows).

HHS is converting each employee's OPF from a paper file to an electronic file or electronic OPF (eOPF). eOPF is an automated solution, developed by Integic Corp., to manage the HHS OPF process. The eOPF allows each employee access to his or her OPF forms and information through a secure Internet connection. It is expected that the system will debut during the summer of 2005. Hard copy OPFs will continue to be maintained until a decision is made by OPM regarding their disposition.

Benefits of having your OPF converted to electronic format include:

- Access at any time (24 hours a day). You won't have to request your file and wait several days for it to become available for review in the office of your HR team.
- You can monitor your own records, which ensures greater accuracy and integrity.
- Email notification to you each time a document is added to your eOPF.
- Pre-defined access roles to prevent unauthorized access to your folder, resulting in greater security and protection of your privacy. There is no change in policy regarding who has the authority to access your OPF.
- Reduced cost associated with storage, maintenance and retrieval of records.
- eOPFs are more secure than paper, have a longer "shelf life" and provide easy backup and recovery capability. Incremental eOPF data backups are taken on a daily basis and full system backups are performed weekly. The database is highly secure with state-of-the-art fire-wall protection.
- Elimination of the potential loss of your OPF during filing and routing.

Employee information sessions will be held during the implementation period. The first two will be held on Thursday, June 16, from 9 to 11 a.m. and 1 to 3 p.m. Both are located in

Masur Auditorium, Bldg. 10. If you are unable to attend one of these sessions, watch for future email notifications regarding dates, times and locations for more sessions.

You should also watch your email for information on accessing the eOPF system. This information will be sent to employees prior to implementation.

Visit the NIH eOPF web site at <http://hr.od.nih.gov/eOPF/default.htm> or the HHS eOPF web site at <http://intranet.hhs.gov/eopf/> for more information and resources. 12

## Conference Room Dedicated to Neva

A conference room in Bldg. 4 was dedicated to Dr. Franklin A. Neva, director of the NIAID Laboratory of Parasitic Diseases (LPD) from 1969 to 1993. He then served as a section head from 1993 to 2005. He made significant scientific contributions in the field of virology and in the areas of malaria, leishmaniasis and strongyloides. Neva transformed the LPD into a modern world-renowned branch that is at the forefront of vaccine development, molecular biology and immunology for parasitic diseases. He officially retired from NIH on Jan. 1, 2005, but is now a scientist emeritus, and is active in clinical and lab work.



*Well-wishers greet NIAID's Dr. Franklin Neva (top, l), in whose honor a conference room in Bldg. 4 was recently dedicated. Among those dropping in was NIAID director Dr. Anthony Fauci (top, r).*





*Above:*  
OSE's Terry Clark (l) and NSTA convention coordinator Jayne Saunders team up to help create the NIH aisle.

*Right:*  
Participants display their free curriculum supplements.

*Below:*  
NIGMS and NINDS booths were just two of many IC displays that formed the NIH aisle.

*Bottom:*  
NIH aisle before the masses arrive



## SCIENCE TEACHERS EXPLORE NIH AISLE

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create an NIH aisle. At events past, IC booths were scattered, making it nearly impossible to convey the fact that the "I" in NIH denotes 27

ICs, not just one or two. The NIH aisle may have given the more than 10,000 teachers at NSTA a new perspective on the nation's leading medical research agency.

Jason Lazarow of NIAAA first proposed the NIH aisle idea at a trans-NIH science education resource group meeting. He chaired a SERG subcommittee to make the idea a reality. Terry Clark, Office of Science Education conference planner, spent more than a year coordinating the event. The challenge was "identifying the appropriate contact person" from each institute, she said. After trying numerous avenues to contact exhibitors, in the end, success came by word of mouth. Clark donned the role of liaison between the ICs and a NSTA convention coordinator. A simple email to the coordinator explaining NIH's goals for the event was a pivotal step towards achieving the objective.

Collaborative effort and a few accessories unified the IC exhibitors. Visitors first knew they were entering a unique realm by the burgundy carpet centered between the two rows of NIH

exhibits, a striking contrast to the predominant beige carpet elsewhere. "We didn't have to pay extra [for the carpet]...NSTA took care of that," said Clark. They also centered a matching banner overhead at the entrance of the aisle. The NIH Office of Communications and Public Liaison worked with the Medical Arts and Photography Branch to develop a unifying marker—a large vertical banner reading The Nation's Medical Research Agency. "The NIH signage certainly led a number of teachers to our booths and the overwhelming response was very positive," said an NHGRI exhibitor.

NIH exhibitors and teachers appreciated the aisle arrangement. Exhibitors thought it was easier to refer visitors to the appropriate booth, and better underscored the NIH mission.

Teachers thought the aisle was great because of all the free materials and the availability of experts who were knowledgeable about those resources, said Clark. "Many teachers were impressed that the NIH consisted of so many different entities with myriad valuable resources for their classrooms," said an NHGRI exhibitor. An NINDS exhibitor noted that it was "easier for participants to get the information they wanted." The NIH aisle helped "teachers see the connection of the institutes, the diversity of resources and the contribution of NIH to our society," said an exhibitor with NIEHS.

Clark plans to recreate the NIH aisle next year, not just for NSTA, but for several other regional conferences too. "Now we have a starting place," she said. 🍎



NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni (l) talks with Dr. Sam Wilson, acting deputy director of NIEHS.

### *And a Bright Future*

## **The National Toxicology Program: A Quarter Century of Progress**

By Robin Mackar

Ever wonder what agency determines what chemicals are hazardous to your health? In many cases, it's the National Toxicology Program. The NTP, an interagency program within HHS headquartered at the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences, celebrated more than 25 years of scientific progress and its role in protecting the health of the public in May.

National leaders in health and science, including NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni, gathered in the NAS building in Washington May 9-10 to recognize the numerous contributions of the NTP and to discuss future directions.

"The NTP serves a critical role for our nation," said Zerhouni. "It provides a venue where a consolidated approach to testing can occur. It exemplifies the best way to meet interdisciplinary needs."

He proudly noted some impressive statistics regarding the media and public's interest in the work of the NTP, particularly the most recent *Report on Carcinogens* (ROC), which he said had more than 1 million web site hits within 2 days of its release and was covered in more than 200 press stories. The ROC, which biennially lists all substances known to cause cancer, is just one of many reports NTP regularly releases.

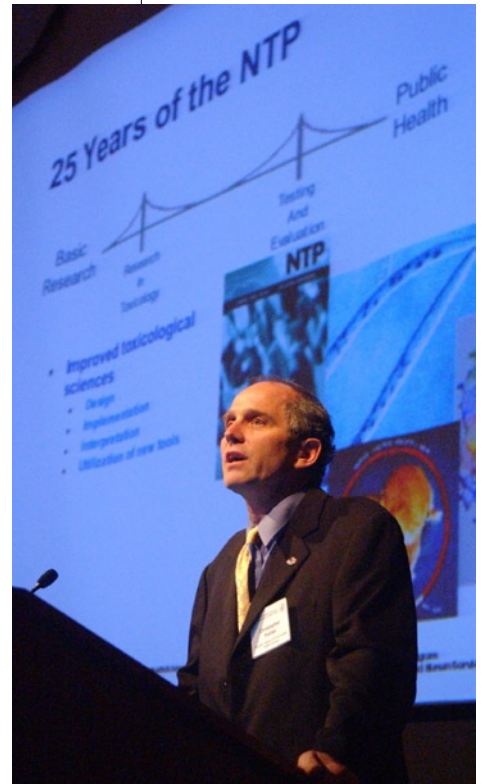
Zerhouni, as well as other speakers, including a former associate director of NTP, Dr. George Lucier, talked about the promise of what they termed "predictive toxicology"—being able to predict whether a chemical might be a toxicant based upon studying its metabolism or knowing whether it affects expression of specific genes

or alters cellular processes such as cell growth or apoptosis (cell death). "The NTP has the ability to tell us more about the role of genes and environment, and to predict how genes will respond to various chemicals," said Zerhouni. "The future of the NTP is very bright."

Other speakers, including Dr. Bernard Goldstein, a dean at the University of Pittsburgh, praised the work of the NTP, especially its role in prevention. "There is no way we can even put a number on how many lives the NTP has saved since its inception in 1978." He cited the Ames test, which is widely used to detect possible chemical mutagens, as a life-saving device that also exemplifies how NTP uses alternatives to animal testing to conduct its studies.

"Reducing, refining and replacing animal testing with alternative methods," is a high priority for the NTP, said Dr. Chris Portier, NTP associate director, as he discussed the program's "Roadmap for the Future." The NTP Roadmap is the result of a year-long process involving input from leading researchers from many fields who worked together to develop a strategy that takes advantage of new technologies. In addition to developing improved testing methods for the more than 80,000 chemicals now available in commerce, NTP is a leader in examining safety issues related to herbal medicines and supplements, nanotechnology and cell phone radiofrequency transmissions. "These are emerging areas that the NTP is addressing."

"A Roadmap for the Future" can be found at <http://ntp.niehs.nih.gov/>. ●



NTP deputy director Dr. Chris Portier gives presentation at the symposium.

### **Camp Fantastic BBQ, June 14**

Join the R&W on Tuesday, June 14 from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on the patio of Bldg. 31 for the 22nd annual Camp Fantastic BBQ. Tickets are \$9 and include lunch from Famous Dave's, Ben & Jerry's and a chance to win \$100. Tickets are on sale at all R&W stores or call (301) 496-4600. Tickets will also be available the day of the BBQ. Wear your favorite sports team apparel. This sports-themed event will be a great way to break from your work day.

## CONFLICT OF INTEREST

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was that the rule was both open to comment and dissent, and temporary; it posited a 1-year moratorium on some previously permissible outside activities, a year during which NIH could collect evidence about its ethics program.

Zerhouni received more than 1,100 opinions from NIH staff who emailed him personally, and more than 1,000 people sent messages to HHS during the public comment period. "I want to thank everybody who's been responsive and forthright in sending me both angry letters as well as informative letters," he said. HHS stated in the introduction to the interim rules that it would revisit them based on comments and feedback.

"We've had a good response from many of the employees," Zerhouni added. "The most helpful comments have been the ones that were very specific—people who came to me with emails saying, 'Here is my specific situation and look what it would do to me.' This process, as painful as it is, is going to protect the agency and we're going to put it behind us."

He admitted that the Feb. 1 announcement was poorly received. "Clearly the impact of the interim proposal that was advanced by HHS and the Office of Government Ethics has had quite a detrimental effect on morale. That's the one thing that just was not intended at all," he said. In the intervening months, he has met with hundreds of employees and is fully acquainted with—and sympathetic to—many of their concerns. But he is unyielding when it comes to NIH's need to provide unimpeachable scientific authority. "We are absolutely not going to compromise on real ethical problems," he said. "The old rules were just not designed to be protective of the agency's interest...There is nothing that is more important to NIH than to maintain the integrity of its advice and public trust."

Zerhouni expressed surprise that many people "interpreted [the HHS interim rule] as being NIH rules. They don't know that, by statute, ethics rules are not under the control of the agency that is subject to the ethics rules." The virtue of the interim rule (upon which NIH insisted), he says, is that it permits "fine-tuning," and that it gives NIH time to collect data on the effectiveness of its ethics program.

"This is an interactive process," he emphasized. "You look at a variety of different proposals from across government—no one has the final answer. You weigh the evidence as you proceed.

"We're making great progress now," he declared.



"I've been meeting with OGE, HHS and other components of the government, and I'm very optimistic that our approach is going to lead to a much more fair and balanced rule."

The two concerns that most riled NIH'ers—that employees with no chance of conflict faced mandatory stock divestiture, and that outside activities as innocent as choir membership seemed to require official permission—will likely not survive the review process unchanged, Zerhouni noted.

What most gratifies him is that, out of the hashing process, a streamlined, quick, uniform and comprehensible set of ethics guidelines will emerge, replacing the scattershot approach that results when all 27 institutes and centers at NIH have their own ethics offices with unique interpretations of what the rules really mean.

To Zerhouni, the 1-year moratorium gives NIH a chance to develop a fully transparent, sensible ethics program. "It's very important to solidify the office...and create a good administrative service center. We have committed to having a very strong administrative service that will be responsive and quick."

He wants to institute a "much more centralized ethics management system" where "all operate under the same rules and methods for applying them.

"We are going to come out of this much stronger," Zerhouni said. "The agency will stand for the right things and our rules will not impose an incredible burden on our employees—I don't want that."

Zerhouni acknowledged that all of this has taken its toll on NIH morale. "Especially when it

*Right:  
Zerhouni expresses confidence that  
the CoI issue will be resolved to  
employees' satisfaction.*

comes on the heels of other things like A-76, and reorganization, and budget issues, and I empathize with that very much. I'm totally in touch with many, many people on the campus who are telling me what they're going through. But I think we'll see it through. I'm confident that this will be worked out shortly, and that we'll get to a better balance on this issue with everybody involved...I have total confidence in the quality of our people here. I am amazed at the resilience of our science administrators and our scientists in the face of great challenges. [CoI] is just one challenge among many."

Zerhouni says NIH'ers need take no action yet on stock holdings and should wait for further direction. But he remains wary of consulting arrangements [with biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies]. "I'm not going to resume or touch any consulting from anybody at NIH until we have a good sense of what's really involved here."

He said the intent "is not to discourage, but to encourage, normal academic pursuits and interactions that are necessary to science" such as the commercialization of inventions... "But I do not believe that all activities are okay as long as they are not overlapping with the official duty. We need to have a better, stronger stance than that... NIH needs to have unimpeachable advice. We need to be the most objective source of advice."

Zerhouni freely concedes that the old ethics system communicated poorly with its clients. His byword for transparent communication is that "those who make the rules need to hear from those to whom the rules apply." He points to two examples of this philosophy in action: When NIH learned from its workforce that parking on campus was becoming intolerable, Zerhouni created an ad hoc parking committee that quickly addressed the problem by adding temporary gravel lots (among other ameliorations). And when security rules in the post-9/11 climate became cumbersome for NIH'ers, he created the CABS—the community advisory board for security.

"You'd be amazed how [these bodies] can improve things" when you give those affected by rules the chance to modify them, he said. The lines of communication between parties "must always be open, frank, honest and adaptive," he added.

Zerhouni could not comment about the progress of individual investigations of those who may have broken the rules, but he did say that "the rule structure that we had...didn't lend itself to good compliance."

Nevertheless, there is a role for NIH scientists in the larger scientific universe: "There are bene-

fits to consulting," he said. "When it comes to translating discoveries—absolutely! And when it comes to the exchange of ideas, yes, it must be bidirectional. But the involvement in marketing and promotion—this bothered me, especially for government scientists. We have to be above reproach.

"We need to have a clearer view of what's really okay and what's not okay," he concludes. "It's very important to get to a conclusion, and to put this issue behind us. The great majority of our employees are people of great integrity, and really deserving of respect and support.

"What's more important in a crisis is not how you got into it, but how you get out of it," he said. "That's how great institutions determine themselves. You will see that, within a few weeks or months, I think NIH will realize that we've done the right thing, in the right way. Let's resist halftime quarterbacking; the game's not over. Wait for the end of the game," he counseled. "We will end up with a preserved reputation and a good system that will make us proud...Yes, there are difficult moments, but you don't lose sight of what's right.

*What's more important in a crisis is not how you got into it, but how you get out of it...I've been through these sorts of rough times...and if you just keep true north, you'll be fine.*

"I'm totally confident and optimistic about this, despite dire predictions to the contrary," he said. He noted that "Dr. [David] Schwartz [nominee for NIEHS director] is coming, Dr. [James] Battey [NIDCD director, who had planned to leave NIH in the wake of new CoI rules] is not leaving."

Zerhouni pointed toward the several "outstanding directors" he has appointed during this time, observing, "NIH remains very attractive to them. I'm confident that conditions that we offer here are just unparalleled...There is nothing that's as outstanding as the intramural program that we have, in terms of resources, in terms of the ability to focus entirely on your science, the ability to be supported for long periods of time so that you can take real gambles and risks in your research." Zerhouni said it has been most gratifying to him to see "a culture of sharing and collaboration that is growing at NIH...I think we're seeing great maturation of the agency in an era where science is requiring interdisciplinary efforts. I think that bodes well."

He joked that an institute director recently called his tenure as NIH director "a *Perfect Storm*," because it has coincided with so many upheavals not of his own making. "I'm pleased by the progress of the agency and challenged at the same time by the *Perfect Storm*," he said calmly. "But I also know that I've been through these sorts of rough times before in my life, and if you just keep true north, you'll be fine. And I think our employees will be too. They're great employees." 🗨

#### **Zerhouni To Join 'Kaiser Conversations on Health,' June 14**

The Kaiser Family Foundation will host NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni for a "Kaiser Conversations on Health" event, featuring an interview and live webcast on Tuesday, June 14 from noon to 1 p.m. Questions will be taken from the audience and via email. The interview will touch on key issues in national medical research and policy, including research funding, new NIH conflict-of-interest and ethics rules, the fight against HIV/AIDS, racial and ethnic disparities in health, ensuring public access to published NIH-supported research, and the state of NIH-funded stem-cell research. The event will be held at the Barbara Jordan Conference Center in downtown Washington, D.C., and will be open to the public. The webcast will be available online starting at noon. Questions may be submitted in advance or during the event to [conversations@kff.org](mailto:conversations@kff.org). To RSVP, contact Tiffany Ford, [tford@kff.org](mailto:tford@kff.org) or (202) 347-5270.

## DNA DAY

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*NHGRI director Dr. Francis Collins takes part in a live, online chat with students and teachers on National DNA Day.*

be read at <http://www.genome.gov/14514261>.

“What I enjoyed most was the opportunity to interact with my colleagues in that type of venue,” said Dr. Colleen McBride, chief of NHGRI’s Social and Behavioral Branch.

National DNA Day, begun in April 2003, commemorates the successful completion of the Human Genome Project and the anniversary of the discovery of DNA’s double helix by Watson and Crick in 1953. The goal of DNA Day, planned and carried out by NHGRI’s Education and Community Involvement Branch, is to provide educational

resources to excite teachers and students about genomics research.

“The online chat was a terrific tool that allowed us to bring together researchers who had the common goal of interacting on a personal level with students to discuss genomics research,” said Vence Bonham, chief of NHGRI’s education branch.

The chat’s “control center” consisted of a network of laptop computers set up in a conference room in Bldg. 50. A moderator and a team of editors directed questions to the most appropriate researcher, who then wrote his or her answer in language that could be easily understood by a high school student. As soon as an answer was submitted by the expert, it appeared in the online chat room that could be easily accessed by any student or class that had a computer set up to view the web.

The chat room’s web-based application—which was 508-compliant so that it could be used by people with vision difficulties—was designed by the NHGRI web team and managed by Larry Thompson, chief of the Communications and Public Liaison Branch. Unlike many online chats that feature just one moderator and one expert answering a single question at a time, NHGRI set up its DNA Day chat room to maximize the number of questions that could be answered during the school day.

“We designed the online chat application so that we could have multiple researchers signed on to the same system answering as many questions about as many topics as possible,” Thompson said. “In addition, our system was designed so that experts could walk in to the room, sit down and start answering questions without a huge learning curve to use the system. We would be glad to share what we’ve learned with other NIH institutes who would like to host similar educational online chats.”

The challenge, according to Thompson, was integrating a customized workflow system into the online chat. This was accomplished by having the questions placed into a moderator “bucket.” The moderator then assigned questions to editors who dealt them to experts.

David Smith, technical team lead for NHGRI’s web site, [www.genome.gov](http://www.genome.gov), wrote the application for the DNA day chat. “I was really happy with how it all turned out and was pleased that it could be accessed by anyone,” he said. “At one point, I looked around and the room was quiet with 14 heads down, working hard to answer questions.”

At the end of the day, NHGRI’s “chatters” had answered 324 questions, approximately 40 per hour. In all, teachers and students sent in 1,139 questions, many of them repeats of questions asked earlier.

In addition to the chat, NHGRI produced two easily accessible, on-demand webcasts, which were video lectures synced with slides that could be viewed by teachers and students for DNA Day. The first featured Collins, who spoke on “The Genome Era: What It Means for You.” The second featured Dr. Elaine Ostrander, chief of NHGRI’s Cancer Genetics Branch, who described her work using the dog genome to understand canine and human disease in a talk titled “The Power of Comparison: Unleashing the Dog Genome.” Both products are available at [www.genome.gov/DNAday](http://www.genome.gov/DNAday).

The web team also made the video presentations available for download so that teachers could save them on their hard drives. "We wanted access to be a primary component of National DNA Day so we made the webcasts available as downloadable zip files for teachers and students who may not have had a high speed Internet connection," said Smith. The 508-compliant presentations were viewed or downloaded nearly 6,000 times during the week of National DNA Day.

Also, as it has done for the past 2 years, NHGRI sent dozens of researchers and staffers acting as "DNA ambassadors" to visit high schools in rural and urban communities across the country. These ambassadors explained basic science concepts and provided first-hand accounts of what life is like on the front lines of genomic research.

"The primary objective of DNA Day is to interest a diverse set of students in pursuing careers in genomic research," said Bonham. "The information is also important for any students who want to understand the impact of genomics research on their future health and its societal implications."

And then there is the sort of student who wants to know about SpongeBob. Demonstrating that scientific expertise can co-exist with cartoon savvy, scientific director Green actually tackled the question, "Does SpongeBob have DNA?" His answer adapted the cartoon's theme song: "Who lives in a pineapple under the sea? Absorbent and yellow and porous is he, etc. Yes, SpongeBob (like all living creatures) has DNA with the same fundamental structure as humans. Now, his SquarePants probably do not contain DNA, though." 12



NIGMS director Dr. Jeremy Berg (front, third from l) with council members (front, from l) Dr. Lisa Staiano-Coico, Dr. Francine Berman, Dr. Kathleen M. Giacomini, (back, from l) Dr. Jeffrey T. Mason, Dr. Brian W. Matthews, Dr. Eric N. Jacobsen and Dr. John C. Goodman.

### New Members Join NIGMS Council

Five new members and one *ex officio* member were recently appointed to the National Advisory General Medical Sciences Council. They are:

Dr. Francine Berman, director of the San Diego Supercomputer Center at the University of California, San Diego, where she also serves as professor of computer science and engineering and endowed chair in the Jacobs School of Engineering.

Dr. Kathleen M. Giacomini, chair of the department of biopharmaceutical sciences and professor of biopharmaceutical sciences, pharmaceutical chemistry, and cellular and molecular pharmacology at the University of California, San Francisco School of Pharmacy.

Dr. John C. Goodman, founder and president of the National Center for Policy Analysis, a nonprofit, nonpartisan public policy research organization in Dallas.

Dr. Brian W. Matthews, professor of physics, Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator and member of the Institute of Molecular Biology, University of Oregon.

Dr. Lisa Staiano-Coico, dean of the college of human ecology at Cornell University, where she also serves as professor of nutritional sciences. In addition, she is professor of microbiology in surgery, microbiology in dermatology, and public health at the Weill Medical College of Cornell University in New York City.

Dr. Jeffrey T. Mason, chair of the department of biophysics at the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Rockville, where he also serves as administrative director of the magnetic resonance microscopy facility. He was named the council's *ex officio* representative from the Department of Defense.

Last year, Secretary Thompson appointed Dr. Eric N. Jacobsen to the council. He is the Sheldon Emery professor of chemistry at Harvard University.

### Fauci Wins AAI Lifetime Award

NIAID director Dr. Anthony Fauci recently was presented the American Association of Immunologists Lifetime Achievement Award "in recognition of his distinguished scientific accomplishment and extraordinary service to the immunology community." AAI president Dr. Susan L. Swain presented the association's



highest award at the AAI annual meeting, held as part of the Experimental Biology 2005 meeting in San Diego.

### CIT Computer Classes

All courses are given without charge. For more information call (301) 594-6248 or consult the training program's home page at <http://training.cit.nih.gov>.

Categorical Data Analysis Using Logistic Regression in SAS Software	6/7
Partek: Visual and Statistical Analysis of Microarray Data	6/8
Partek: Identifying Differentially Expressed Genes	6/8
Partek: Basic Features for Microarray Data	6/9
Partek: Classification of Microarray Data	6/9
Introduction to Flash MX Application (with Accessibility)	6/10
What's New in Listserv	6/14
Introduction to Principal Component Analysis and Distance Geometry	6/15
Fundamentals of FileMaker Pro 7	6/22
Introduction to mAdb	6/28
NCBI's Entrez Gene Quick Start	6/29

### NIH Training Center Classes

The Training Center supports the development of NIH human resources through consultation and provides training, career development programs and other services designed to enhance organizational performance. For more information call (301) 496-6211 or visit <http://LearningSource.od.nih.gov>.

Advanced Time and Attendance Using ITAS	6/6
Consolidated Purchasing Through Contracts	6/6
Federal Supply Schedules	6/6
Professional Service Orders	6/6
Buying From Businesses in the Open Market	6/7
Review, Update on EEO Policies & Processing Laws	6/7, 6/15, 7/13, 7/20
NBS Travel System for Approving Officials	6/8
Simplified Acquisition Refresher	6/8
Purchase Card Processing System	6/9
Purchase Card Training	6/10
Fellowship Payment System	6/13
Intercultural Communications at the NIH	6/14
Basic Time and Attendance Using ITAS	6/28-29
NIH Domestic Travel (NBS Travel System)	7/18-20
Delegated Acquisition Training Program	7/19-22

### Cancer Research, Regulatory Fellowships

NCI and FDA have announced the start of the NCI-FDA Research and Regulatory Review Fellowship program. The objective is to train a cadre of scientists in cancer research and research-related regulatory review so that they can develop skills that bridge the two disciplines and cultures.

NCI-FDA fellows will learn to build awareness of regulatory requirements into the early stages of medical product development and will devise strategies to improve planning throughout the research and regulatory review phases. They will also learn how to use state-of-the art knowledge and technology in the design, conduct and review of clinical trials.

The fellowships offer a unique career opportunity for participating researchers to facilitate the new age of molecular medicine. New targeted therapies and diagnostic products will demand new skills and processes that must be incorporated into the research and regulatory system. The fellowships last for 1 to 4 years, based on the training program. Fellows will work closely with mentors representing senior-level medical and scientific staff at NCI and FDA.

Candidates must have an M.D. and/or Ph.D., or an equivalent degree. They must also be either a U.S. citizen or have permanent residency status.

More information about the program, including application deadlines, can be found at <http://iotftraining.nci.nih.gov>.

### Child Care Board Seeks Members

The NIH child care board is seeking applicants. Are you interested in child care as an issue that affects work at NIH? The board advises NIH with regard to child care programs and policies and serves as an advocate for affordable, accessible and quality child care for the NIH community. You do not need to be a child development expert, just an NIH employee with an interest in this issue and a willingness to participate in the work of the board.

Members serve 3-year terms beginning in September 2005 and are required to attend 7 meetings a year. The board is currently seeking employees to fill vacancies that may occur this month.

For a description of member requirements, a calendar of meetings, information about board activities and an online application, visit <http://does.ors.od.nih.gov/childcare>. Applications are due by June 10. For more information call Mary Ellen Savarese, NIH child care coordinator, at (301) 402-8180.

### NIH Library Training Caters to Science

Do you want to spend less time searching yet get more targeted literature results? Find out how to search, capture and mine specific databases and research tools in eight different free classes such as Resources for Evidence-Based Medicine. For details on class content, dates, times and locations, visit <http://nihlibrary.nih.gov/ResourceTraining/>.



### Neurocognitive Measures Study

The Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences is conducting a study examining the relationship between computerized and traditional neurocognitive measures with healthy adult men and women ages 18-79. Participants will complete a brief interview and participate in a one-time testing session in Bethesda. Participants will be compensated for their time. Call Lt. John Ashburn, (301) 295-2501 or email [jashburn@usuhs.mil](mailto:jashburn@usuhs.mil).

### Healthy Volunteers Needed

Volunteers ages 18-65 who are employed and able to complete a health and employment benefits survey are asked to call (240) 353-7238 (TTY 1-866-411-1010) for more information. Refer to study # 05-CC-0008. Compensation is provided.

### Healthy Women Needed

Healthy women between the ages of 18 and 55 consider helping someone with rheumatoid arthritis. Compensation provided. Call today for study information: 1-800-411-1222 (TTY 1-866-411-1010).

### Diabetes Study Recruits

Do you have pre-diabetes? Join a National Institutes of Health research study. Call 1-800-411-1222 (TTY 1-866-411-1010) and refer to study # 05-H-0009.

### Men with Osteo Sought

A study of osteoarthritis is recruiting men ages 30-65. They can take part in NIH study # 04-AT-0239 evaluating hormones in men with osteoarthritis pain. Compensation provided. Call 1-800-411-1222 (TTY 1-866-411-1010).

### Healthy Children Sought

NIMH seeks healthy children 6-18 for mood and anxiety disorder study. Study may include physical exam, brain imaging and psychological interviews. Compensation provided. Call 1-800-411-1222 (TTY 1-866-411-1010). Refer to study # 01-M-0192.

### Severe Systemic Lupus Erythematosus?

If you have severe lupus or someone you love has severe lupus, call for study information: 1-800-411-1222 (TTY 1-866-411-1010). Refer to study # 04-C-0095.

### Healthy African Americans, Africans

Healthy African Americans and Africans with low white blood count needed. You can help researchers at NIH understand why individuals with low white blood count remain healthy. Call 1-800-411-1222 (TTY 1-866-411-1010) and refer to study # 03-DK-0168. Compensation is available.

### HIV and Hepatitis C Study

HIV and hepatitis C virus patients may consider participating in NIH research study # 04-I-0187. Call 1-800-411-1222 (TTY 1-866-411-1010).

### Kapikian Wins Sabin Gold Medal

NIAID's Dr. Albert Z. Kapikian was awarded the Albert B. Sabin Gold Medal at a ceremony on May 10. Cited for his "extraordinary achievements in vaccinology," he is the 13th recipient of this recognition, awarded annually by the Sabin Vaccine Institute to honor achievements by vaccinologists and infectious disease experts.



In addition, Dr. John R. La Montagne, who served as NIAID deputy director from 1998 until his death in November 2004, was posthumously recognized at the ceremony, which was held in conjunction with the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases eighth annual Conference on Vaccine Research in Baltimore.

Kapikian's career of more than 47 years is distinguished by the development of the first licensed rotavirus vaccine.

In the 1950s, he began studying the epidemiology and causes of various viral diseases. He is renowned for pioneering studies using electron microscopy to discover and characterize viruses causing major diseases in humans. In 1972, he identified the Norwalk virus, the first virus associated with acute epidemic gastroenteritis, gaining recognition as "the father of human gastroenteritis virus research." In 1973, Kapikian and two colleagues identified the virus that causes hepatitis A. He also became the first in the United States to detect and visualize human rotavirus, which was discovered by others in Australia. He dedicated his efforts to studying this leading cause of severe diarrhea in infants and children, which accounts for more than 500,000 deaths annually, predominantly in the developing world.

Kapikian led a nearly 25-year effort to develop an oral rotavirus vaccine. The NIAID team's rotavirus vaccine strategy involved mating outer proteins from different human rotavirus strains with a monkey rotavirus that is attenuated (weakened) for humans and combining the resulting hybrid viruses into one vaccine. From a single-strain vaccine in 1984, the vaccine was made protective against the four most important clinical strains of rotavirus. In 1998, it became the first rotavirus vaccine licensed in the U.S.

Dr. John La Montagne's 30-year career at NIH also was recognized at the ceremony. He contributed to international efforts to fight emerging and re-emerging infectious diseases, including those related to biodefense. His longtime colleague, Dr. Regina Rabinovich, director, infectious diseases, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, presented the special award to his widow, Mary Elaine Elliot La Montagne.

## NINDS's Liu Returns to China to Train Students

By Shannon E. Garnett

Dr. Yuan Liu, chief of the NINDS Office of International Activities, recently traveled back to her native China to help teach students about neuroscience career development and opportunities for international research collaboration.

Her trip was sponsored by the International Brain Research Organization (IBRO) as part of its Visiting Lecture Team Program (VLTP), which provides basic neuroscience training to students in economically developing countries and features intense 10-day lecture courses on various neuroscience topics.

"The purpose of the program is to plant seeds in these countries to help develop the next generation of neuroscientists," said Liu, who not only lectured the students but also donated 100 copies of a textbook to them.

The textbook, a Chinese translation of *From Neuron to Brain*, by renowned neuroscientist Dr. John Nicholls, is one of the best textbooks for neuroscience, according to Liu. Nicholls, who served as director of the VLTP group from 1994 to 2002, also traveled to China with Liu and other VLTP members. "If you can have a version in your language along with the original text, it's much easier to absorb and understand," said Liu.

She speaks from experience as she was once a student from the economically developing China 20 years ago when she enrolled in a neurobiology course taught by Nicholls. Although she was already interested in science, neurobiology in particular, she remembers that the course had a profound effect on her.

"I feel like my participation now is in some sense a repayment because I was the beneficiary of a similar program," said Liu, who is considered one of the program's role models. "Although I am an American citizen, in my heart I still love my home country. I hope Chinese science can blossom and grow."

Born in Tianjin, China, to intellectual parents, Liu grew up with a love of books and knowledge and an appreciation of education. Her mother was a language scholar who maintained shelves of foreign language books, and her father studied mathematics and engineering in the United States with the goal of bringing Western science and technology back to China. His plans were derailed, however, as he was later accused of being a "counter-revolutionary" and was put in jail when Liu was only 3 years old.

At a young age, Liu's mother encouraged her to read, and eventually to establish a children's



*Drs. John Nicholls and Yuan Liu (r) sign copies of From Neuron to Brain during the Visiting Lecture Team Program course in China.*

library to share her books with friends. "She even taught me how to catalog the books according to subject," said Liu.

Liu's own formal education was abruptly halted in October 1966, after she completed 5th grade, when the whole country of China fell into turmoil due to the Chinese Cultural Revolution.

According to Liu, the revolution, which was begun by Communist Party leader Mao Zedong, was actually an anti-revolutionary movement against all previous human cultures—including traditional Chinese and Western cultures. "For 10 years, there were no schools at all. All the schools were closed and there was no intellectual stimulation," said Liu.

Her home was invaded and all of the family's books were thrown onto the front lawn and burned by the Red Guard, a group of students who violently carried out the revolution. "They burned every book, every volume. They took away literally everything—all of our furniture and even our house," she said. "Even today the smell of burning paper brings back terrible memories."

Liu and her mother were forced to live in a basement and Liu was later required to work in a factory. Still her desire to read and study continued. She borrowed things to read including an old English textbook that she was only allowed to keep for a few days. Knowing this, her mother borrowed a typewriter as well and hand-typed the textbook so Liu could continue to study. This, of course, got her mother into a great deal of trouble.

In 1976, after the revolution ended, Liu became a college student at age 24 upon receiving one of the highest marks on a nationwide college exam. She then enrolled in Peking University and was placed in the department of biology. "I was very lucky and motivated," she said. "I had a good mother who encouraged me to study."

Liu went on to earn her bachelor's and master's degrees in neurophysiology at Peking University. It was during this time that she took Nicholls' neurobiology course and was later invited to join his laboratory in Switzerland. She went on to earn her Ph.D. in neuroscience from the Biozentrum, Universität Basel in Switzerland while working in Nicholls' laboratory.

She later accepted a postdoctoral position at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and from there she came to NIH as an intramural scientist for NICHD. Soon after, she moved to an NINDS laboratory, studying synaptic transmission and plasticity.

In 1995, she became a program director for the Basic Neuroscience Program at NIAAA. She was recruited back to NINDS in 1999 as a program director in the channels, synapses and circuits cluster, and became chief of the newly established Office of International Activities in 2004.

Liu strongly believes in IBRO's mission to promote neuroscience and encourage communication and collaborations among brain researchers worldwide. ①